

Is it true that Brahman, Paramātmān and Bhagavān refers to three different stages of realisation of the Absolute Truth? Are there any clearly discernible verses in the Bhagavatam to support this claim?

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Yes, in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and Bhagavad-Gītā, there is clear delineation between the different stages of realization of Absolute Truth. Let us first see the famous verse which talks about the 3 different nomenclature of Absolute Truth (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.2.11):

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṃ yaj jñānam advayam |*

*brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate ||*

“The knowers of truth call this truth advayam-jñānam, the supreme conscious being, who is called Brahman (by the jñānis), Paramātmā (by the yogīs) and Bhagavān (by the devotees).”

Now in this verse there is no mention of hierarchy. However, what is clear is that Brahman, Paramātmān & Bhagavān are 3 different ways in which same Absolute Truth is addressed.

Now, to see difference between the three, we have to look at other verses of scriptures. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam for instance says:

*aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām*

*yan-mitraṃ paramānandaṃ pūrṇaṃ brahma sanātanam*

How greatly fortunate are Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men and all the other inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi! There is no limit to their good fortune, because the Absolute Truth, the source of transcendental bliss, **the eternal Supreme Brahman, has become their friend.** (ŚB 10.14.32)

From this verse, one can see that Kṛṣṇa is being addressed as pūrṇa-brahma (complete form of Brahman). Further Kṛṣṇa is said to possess different attributes like paramānandaṃ (Supreme bliss), whereas impersonal Brahman is attributeless. Hence, here it is clear that Kṛṣṇa, who is said to be complete Brahman, is full aspect of Absolute Truth while impersonal Brahman is not complete. Thus Bhagavān feature is above Brahman in terms of completeness.

Furthermore, in Bhagavad-Gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*

I am the basis of Brahman. (BG 14.27)

Here, Lord Kṛṣṇa declares Truth about Himself. This explanation i.e. Lord Kṛṣṇa is basis of Brahman has also been accepted by Ācāryas of advaitavāda. In terms of saṁskṛta grammar, there is no fault in translation. The word pratiṣṭhā has been seen in other śruti statements also where the meaning is ‘basis’ or ‘source’. So from Bhagavad-Gītā also, one can see that Bhagavān is source of Brahman.

Now let us compare between Paramātmān and Bhagavān. Let us look at another verse:

*kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmāne*

*praṇata-kleśa-nāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ*

Again and again we offer our obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, Hari, the son of Vasudeva. That **Supreme Paramātmā, Govinda**, vanquishes the suffering of all who surrender to Him. (ŚB 10.73.16)

Here, Kṛṣṇa is said to be Paramātmā. Hence we know for sure is that Bhagavān is not under Paramātmān. He is either more complete or equal to Paramātmān aspect of Absolute Truth. Let’s look at another verse:

*viṣṭabhyāham idaṃ kṛtsnam ekāmśena sthito jagat*

I pervade this universe by my one portion, Paramātmā. (BG 10.42)

Here it is clear that Paramātmā form is one portion of Lord Kṛṣṇa or Bhagavān.

Based on above explanations, we can understand that there is clear mention of different

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Venkatanaatha Suta

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Yes, it is true, as said by [Pranjul](#) Prabhu, in his answer.

वदन्ति तत्तत्त्वविदस्तत्त्वं यज्ज्ञानमद्वयम् ।

ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्द्यते ॥ ११ ॥

Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān.

-Shrimad Bhaagavatam, Khanda 1, Adhyaaya 2, Shloka 11

The second line has been quoted twice by Shripaada Madhvacharya, in his Brahma Sutra Bhaashya (Adhyaaya 1, Paada 1, Sutrās 7 and 12)

ॐ तस्मिन्मोक्षोपदेशात् ॐ ॥ ०७-०७ ॥

न हि गोपात्मनिष्ठस्य मोक्षः ।

'यस्यनुचितः प्रतिबुद्ध आत्माऽस्मिन् सन्देहे गहने प्रविष्टः ।

स विश्वकृत् स हि सर्वस्य कर्ता तस्य लोकः स उ लोक एव'

इत्यात्मनिष्ठस्य मोक्ष उपदिश्यते ।

'अयमात्मा ब्रह्म' ॥

ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्द्यते ।

'दर्ता दूर्वाससं सोममात्मेशब्रह्मसम्भवान्' ॥

'चेतनस्तु द्विधा प्रोक्तो जीव आत्मेति न प्रभो ।

जीवा ब्रह्मादयः प्रोक्ता आत्मैकस्तु जनार्दनः ॥

इतरेष्व्यात्मशब्दस्तु सोपचारोऽभिधीयते ॥

तस्यात्मनो निर्गुणस्य ज्ञानान्मोक्ष उदाहृतः ॥

सगुणास्त्वरूपे प्रोक्तस्तज्ज्ञानान्मोक्षं मुच्यते ।

परो हि पुरुषो विष्णुस्तस्मान्मोक्षस्ततः स्मृतः' इति पाश्चे ॥ ०७ ॥

7. Because it is taught that he obtains final release who

Indeed release cannot be obtained by him who is devoted to the qualified (Brahman). For in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad release is said to be obtained by him who is devoted to Atman, in the text “He by whom the omniscient Lord who is enshrined in the heart which is centered in the body, is properly understood, as the author of Vayu and the author of all, he attains to that exalted world which is the world of the Lord.” The Mandukya text has ‘this Atman is Brahman.’ In Bhagavata it is said “the Lord is spoken of as Brahman, Paramatman and Bhagavan (on account of his being perfect and unlimited, and Supreme Lord full of glory and grace).” (In another text of the same work) we find, “She begot Datta Durvasa Soma,

ॐ आनन्दमयोऽध्यासात् ॐ ॥ 12-12 ॥

आनन्दमयो ब्रह्मादिः प्रकृतिर्विष्णुर्वा । ब्रह्मशब्दाद्विष्णुपरमस्य प्राप्तिः शतानन्दनाम्ना च । अष्टमूर्तित्वात्सूर्यं प्रोक्तत्वाच्च रुद्रस्य । एतन्मेवैवमपि । ‘मम योगिर्महद्ब्रह्म’ इति ब्रह्मशब्दाद्ब्रह्मावाच्यं प्रकृतेः । ‘बृह’ जातिजीवकमलानशब्दराशिषु इति ब्रह्मशब्दादेव सर्वजीवानाम् । अन्नमयत्वादेश्च ।

तथाऽपि न त आनन्दमयशब्देनोच्यन्ते । किन्तु विष्णुरेव ।

‘तदेव ब्रह्म परमं कवीनाम्’

‘एतमेव ब्रह्मः परमेश्वरः’

‘ब्रह्मशब्दः परे विष्णौ नान्यत्र क्वचिद्व्यति ।

असम्पूर्णाः परे यस्मादुपचारेण वा भवेत्’ ॥

ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भावयान्ति शब्दते ।

‘वासुदेवात्मकं ब्रह्म मूलमन्त्रेण वा यतिः’ ॥

इत्यादिषु तस्मिन्नेव प्रसिद्धब्रह्मशब्दाध्यासात् ॥ 12 ॥

Nevertheless, these are not spoken of as the ‘blissful’ by that term. But it is Vishnu alone. ‘It is the highest Brahman of the wise.’ ‘Him alone they call Brahman.’ ‘The word Brahman is properly used to denote Vishnu the highest Lord and never any other; for all others (souls) are imperfect and can only in a secondary sense be called Brahman.’ The Lord is spoken of as Brahman, Paramatman (the perfect self), Bhagavan (the Almighty). The ascetic should with *Mulamanttra* worship Brahman which is Vasudeva. For here is the word Brahman repeated which (as evidenced by the references quoted) is accepted to denote (Him) Vishnu alone. .

One can also notice that the quotation exactly matches the second line.

However, it is uncertain whether this refers to different stages of realization. It mainly talks about three names of Brahma - Brahma, Bhagavaan and Paramaatma.

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Related **By regarding the Truth as just pure awareness, aren't you invalidating the Saguna aspect of Brahman?**

Thanks for this beautiful question.

By regarding water as formless, does the solid aspect of water get invalidated?



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By regarding water as formless, does the vapour aspect of water get invalidated?





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By regarding the water as colourless, does coloured water get invalidated?



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No!

It's just the truth about water that's being stated by saying that water is formless.

It's because of the formless water, does ice become meaningful; it's because of the colourless water that coloured water becomes meaningful.

By stating the Truth as just pure awareness, it's only a transcendental fact that's being stated about it.

Saguna Brahman is not being invalidated but it's only being transcended to realise the formless aspect of the Supreme Reality.

But as long as ice is being regarded as ice only...as something totally separate from, and independent of, water, such a notion has to be dismissed.

When ice is melted, the formless nature of water stands revealed.

Similarly if Truth is regarded as Saguna and Saguna only...as something totally separate from, and independent of, its source the Nirguna, such a notion has to be done away with.

When by the power of Jnana, the names and forms are transcended, the pure awareness aspect of Truth stands revealed.

So it's not a question of invalidating but transcending.

Thanks for reading

Nirvritananda

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Related **Is Parabrahman the Absolute? Or is it one step below the Absolute?**

Bramhan means the absolute consciousness. Para means that which is transcendental.

Parabramha means the transcendental absolute consciousness. Doesn't get much more absolute.

That parabramha took various forms to accomplish various objectives, but remained itself all throughout. It never changed. Yet, all that appeared to change happened within its being. When that bramhan took on the role of the generative, it was referred to as parabramha. When it takes on the role of the sustainer and dreamer, it is Sri Maha Vishnu, the limitless infinite being that occupies all 'space' simultaneously. When it dissolved all of that back into itself, it took on the role of Shiva, i.e., Mahakala (Great Time). That evolution, sustenance, and involution of the creation happens like a spider weaves its own web and withdraws its own web back into itself.



This web (of information / karma) is known as maya, the matrix.



Saying Bramhan, Parabramha, is merely changing its nature (semantically) from the abstract absolute consciousness, to its status as an entity. It is like changing it from one kind of noun (object) to another kind of noun (person). It is the origin of identity itself. These are all various properties that are simultaneously true, as it is both the subject (1) and the object (0).

It can be referred to as the impersonal (Bramhan) to the person (Paramatma, Parabramha, etc.).

Bramhan means the generative source. Atma means the center. Both are descriptive



The word Brahman (absolute consciousness) is close to the other word Paramātmā (Paramātmā).

To understand these words, learn Sanskrit and how they are pronounced and spelled.

That supreme Brahman is neither void (0) nor existence/identity (1). It is indeterminate and is both simultaneously. It also has no second. It is one without a second. That non dual nature is called as Advaitam. However, we experience That as dual (2) as both observer and observed. As long as the observer/observed distinction is true for us, we exist in the realm of duality. When that distinction ceases, it is the state of Advaitam, which is the very nature of Parabrahma (transcendental generative source), Paramātmā (transcendental center), Parameshwara (transcendental Ishwara or transcendental person). That Ishwara is the original vibration of awareness that is self-existent, self-manifesting and beyond birth and death. It is of the nature of Parashakti (dynamic) situated in the Paramashiva (static). The first ripple (spandana) in the ocean of consciousness.



Brahman is the backdrop in which a virtual sea of all sorts of imaginary/virtual objects comes into being. It serves as both the backdrop (0) and the knower (1). It knows of itself by itself. It takes on innumerable forms in its virtual limitless series of expansions, and yet, remains absolutely unchanged. That is why we say "Om Purnamadaha Purnamidam Purnat Purna mudachyathe Purnasya Purnamaadayaaya PurnamEva Vasishyathe... Om shanti shanti shanti..." It is the infinite absolute, from this absolute the infinite absolute was created, but that infinity minus this infinity, resulted in infinity alone, infinity unchanged, ... in all this ocean of infinity, there was only peace alone, peace only, and supreme peace.

Shanti shanti shanti is repeated thrice: individually, collectively, universally.

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Related **In Hinduism, is there absolute truth? Or what is absolute truth?**

Hindu philosophy known as Vedānta presents a twofold schema of Truth/Reality –

1. The objective or absolute Truth – *paramārthika satya*
2. The subjective or relative Truth – *vyavahārika satya*.



Absolute Truth



Relative Truth

Folks in Australia in absolute terms, in relation to the Global North Pole are upside down their entire lives (*paramārthika satya*), yet they all live, work and feel as if they are living on a flat earth (*vyavahārika satya*).

You might be surprised to know that a spot on the surface of the Earth is moving at 1675 km/h or 465 meters/second. Just think, for every second, you're moving almost half a kilometer through space (*paramārthika satya*). Yet every one of us experiences stillness and stability of the earth and would never even conceive of the speed of moving through space (*vyavahārika satya*). Both perspectives are contradictory but True at the same time – most educated and sane



...from an absolute philosophical perspective we are in essence emanations of consciousness, rays of the Divine Light, sparks of the cosmic fire — whatever metaphor you wish to use for *jīvatman*, yet we do not realise this and think of ourselves wholly in terms of our self-assumed identities associated with the mind-body complex existing in a finite world, living lives of low level neurosis and quiet discontent— both are true from the different perspectives.

#### APPLICATION for Religion

From our limited, self-centered, earthly perspective we are masters of the world and extremely important. We think that there is a Creator of the world who has chosen us as the special recipients of his grace and favour, he created the world especially for us, and has bestowed on us his immutable laws to guide us for as long as he chooses to let the earth survive. He demands that we acknowledge his great favour and blessings and we are obliged to offer him worship in gratitude and submission and to sing his praises at regular intervals. When we stray from his prescribed path and commandments, he becomes enraged and either personally intervenes or sends an emissary to act on his behalf. He demands unswerving loyalty and as a reward he will destroy the earth resurrect the dead, conducts Day of Judgement and all those who are lacking in belief and piety will be sent to a place of damnation and torment, those who meet his criteria will be admitted to a place of eternal pleasure and happiness.



The Sky from the Earth



The Milky Way Galaxy

That is the **geo-centric perspective** and then there is the **Hubble perspective**. Our Solar system is located in the Milky Way galaxy in which there are approximately 100 billion to 3.2 trillion planets – some estimates put the number as high as 8 trillion planets. And then there are 100 million to 200 billion Galaxies in the Universe! In other words, planet earth is the size of a grain of sand on all the combined beaches of the world!!!

We confidently assume the Creator must be greater than the vast universe that he created. So what sense does it make, for the Almighty Self-born Creator that is omniscient, omnipresent and eternal, to install his frail, ephemeral, chosen humans on this tiny grain of sand called earth, and then actively participate, regulate, demand recognition and tribute, submission and gratitude, and intervene in their lives? The human life-span is a mere 100 years which would be like a millionth of a fraction of the time it would take the Almighty to blink His non-winking eyes! The whole God-creates-intervenes-redeems - judges - punishes-rewards scenario is complete nonsense from the Hubble perspective!

The Vedānta philosophy on the other hand declares that this entire Universe with all its trillions and billions of planets is the physical energy body of Brahman — the Unified Field — the Space, Time, Thought continuum. All of us sentient beings on this and all the other millions of worlds, are cells in His energy body, or dreams in the cosmic consciousness. We have no substantial or independent existence apart from the Totality of Being — from which we can never be separate. This is what we call the Līlā — the play of the Divine.

In Puranic terms Lord Vishnu reclines upon the Serpent of Eternity (*ananta-sesha*) undifferentiated ocean of the universe (*kshīra sagara*) and from every pore of his skin a galaxy emerges.





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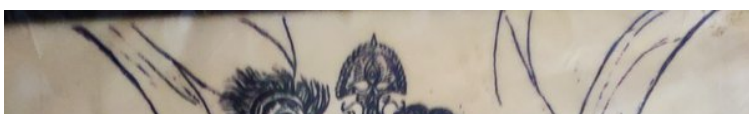
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Related **What is the difference between realising the absolute truth in Brahman, Parmatma and the supreme personality of Godhead? Which one is better?**

All three are one much like water ...vapour, water and ice.

Brhm has no form, only two powers. One, power to protect its own existence; two, anand. Does no work.

Paramaatma has form or roop, abode or dham and parikers but no passtimes or leela . Call Him Vishnu. Bhagwaan in contrast has all the above aspects plus leela. Call Him Ram, Krshn, Shiv, Bhagvafi, Ganesh, Surya etc.







All three give anand or bliss forever. Anand of Brhm is like a man touching a mango; of paramaatma like touching, seeing and smelling a mango and of Bhagvan, whom you call supreme personality of Godhead, like touching, seeing, smelling and tasting and also eating the mango.

Realizing absolute truth in Brhm means merging in Him as a river in the ocean or sandal powder with water; is called kaivalya or sayuj or akatva. Worshippers of paramaatma and Bhagvan attain the following muktis in liberation 1 Sayuj ie. merging in Him, 2 salokya ie. living in His abode, 3 sammeepya ie. living near Him, 4 saroopya ie. getting His form and 5 samrishti ie. getting all powers of God.

However ,worshippers of Bhagvan have the additional benefit of leelas.





Therefore, all are one but still different. Compare them with the Trinity of Christians, Father Son and the Holy Ghost.

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**Arnaw Kumar {अर्णव कुमार}**

In life or in death, Radha & Krishna are my eternal shelter. · 4y

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**|| Hare Krishna ||**

Since inquiries about absolute truth is done by our human mind, therefore, Let's first try to understand the nature of the human mind and then we will see why *{According to Srīmad-Bhagavatam, it is important to enquire about the absolute truth?}*

*Every point is discussed in a question-answer format and every answer is directly picked from the Lecture delivered by **His Divine Grace Srīla Prabhupad on 1st verse of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam on Feb 20, 1975. Caracas.***

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Hare Krishna,

Bengali commentator Sri Ganga Nath Sahaya in his commentary 'Anvitartha Prakasha' says that Srimad Bhagavatam has 18,000 slokas. He states that 'sloka' here means 'Anustup chhanda' (32 syllables). As Monier-Williams says, 32 syllables is the standard verse-length in the Gita also (though there are a fair number that are longer, especially in chapt. 11)

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.21.41 states—

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**Brahman** and **Purusha** are synonymous terms. They are used to denote the same supreme principality.

In the scriptures, both the names are used interchangeably.

**What is Brahman?**

**Brahman** is the origin, shelter and point of dissolution for everything animate and inanimate.

**Taittiriya Upanishad 3.1.3:**

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This is not a Gaudia Vaishnava claim. It is the claim of Vyasadeva who declares this in the Srimad Bhagavatam (SB) itself. And Vyasadeva is recognised to be the compiler of the vedas. SB 12.13.11,15 says:

ādi-madhyāvasāṇeṣu  
vairāgyākhyāna-saṁyutam  
hari-līlā-kathā-vratā-  
mṛtānandita-sat-suram  
sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ yad  
brahmātmaikatva-lakṣanam

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6

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In Vedanta, the Saguna aspect of Brahman is the concept of assigning 'qualities' to Brahman.

But what is the point of discussing whether pure Nothingness or Is-ness (Brahman) has qualities or not. It's just mental gymnastics, all conceptual, and only for the sake of the ego-mind thinking it 'understands' reality and has a bank of 'book knowledge' that it can refer to as

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Yes you are definitely right in a great aspect...

There is a saying in Sanskrit as "Satyam bruyat Priyam bruyat Hetam Bruyat Anahetam Na bruyat "

It means when one speaks he should speak the truth which is Priyam and in general goodness and by nature which is showering kindness , fondness and consoling ...and most importantly

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There is a difference in the amount of bliss experienced. It's all about bliss. Always has been.

*Brahmaanand* is like a drop of water compared to the ocean of *Premanand* (Krsnanand). The bliss of *Vaikuntha Paramatma* falls somewhere between the two.

Sri Radha Krsna are the two esoteric *murtis* of *Brahm*. They are crystallized *Brahm*. Their abode

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Hare Krishna. Jai Shiv Shankar. Jai Srila Prabhupada.

aharṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma  
brahmāharṁ paramaṁ padam  
evam samikṣya cātmānam  
ātmany ādhāya niṣkale

daśantaṁ takṣakaṁ pāde  
lelihānaṁ viṣānanaḥ  
na drakṣyasi śarīraṁ ca

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
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You use the word 'blatant' as if Srila Prabhupada's distinction is somehow offensive. Srila Prabhupada gave us the Bhagavad Gita as it is, giving us Krishna's pure teachings, not like many other unauthorised commentators who try to put their own concocted version forward.

Regarding the 3 aspects of Krishna, this is a direct quote from Srimad Bhagavatam 1.2.11

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas  
tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam  
brahmeti paramātmēti  
bhagavān iti śabdante*

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I remember a quote by a great man called **Baba Devidas Amte**, a Hindu social worker, philosopher and philanthropist:

***"If one observes well the smallest petal of a fallen flower, he may deduce the deepest***

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It's not just Vedanta that says you're all powerful.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image;"

You say, "Ouch! I just got a paper cut! Why can't I instantly heal my wound? Where're my godlike powers?"

Well, there you have it. You're not God. You've proven it.

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There is a saying in Hinduism: "The same thing, which is All that is, is called by the jnani, Brahman; by the yogi, Paramatman; and by the bhakta, Bhagavan."

"It is said that the realized ones call that Being, which is the Non-Dual Knowledge, Brahman, Paramatma, or Bhagavan." - Bhagavata Purana 1.2.11

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rationality untatnomable.

Hindu traditions, the "indigenous traditions of India" (Hinduism) is a "quest", much like the Sciences, for the "nature of reality". There are no beliefs in Science, or likewise in Hinduism.

This "trut

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